

GI SPECIAL 2#C17

BETRAYAL

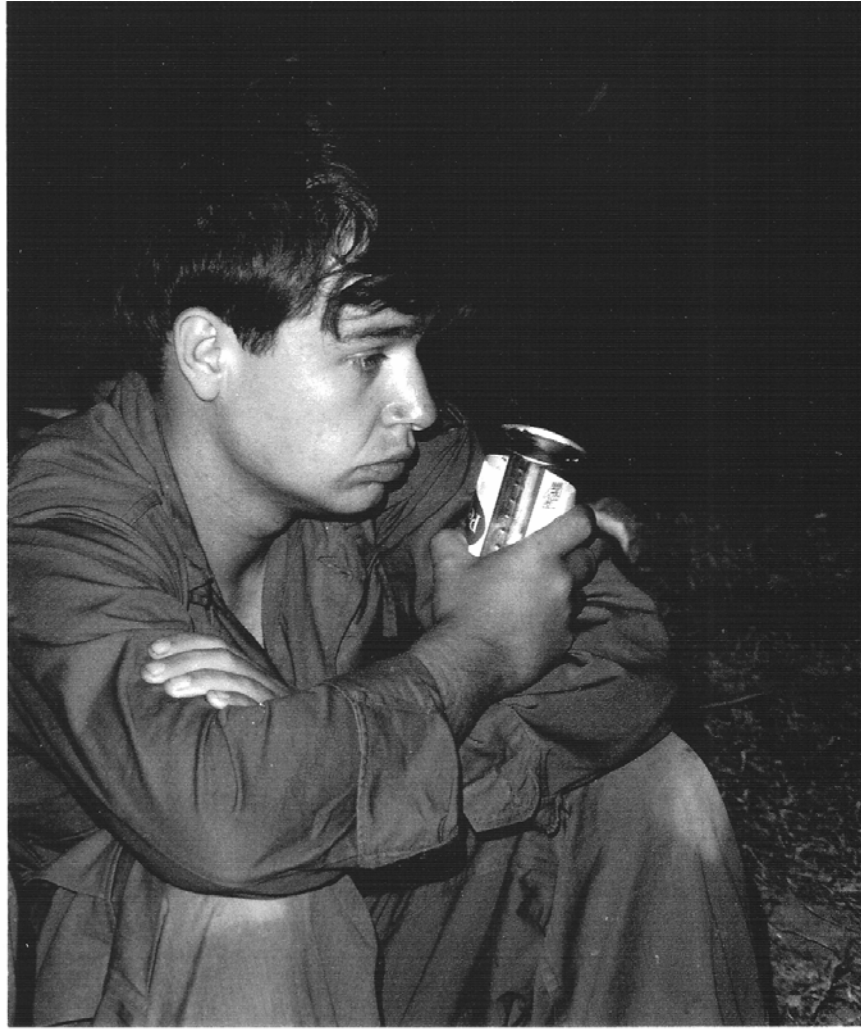


Photo taken in Vietnam 1971

"I believe one of the deepest wounds inflicted during the Vietnam War, as American's betrayal of its own military troops. It is the wound that is talked about the least, because of the enormous denial obliterating the truth of that insidious insanity. It undermines every layer of the veteran's psyche, and can only be described as a hemorrhage of the human soul."

Mike Hastie

Vietnam veteran

I-R-A-Q

"I Remember Another Quagmire"

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, U.S. Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (Please contact at: hastiemike@earthlink.net) for more examples of his outstanding work. T)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Falluja Offensive Succeeds In Capturing A Hospital; Two Marines Dead; Iraqi Occupation Troops Deserting



US soldiers battling in Fallujah, Nov. 4, 2004. (Xinhua/Reuters photo)

November 8, 2004 JIM KRANE NEAR FALLUJAH, The Scotsman & Aljazeera & By RICHARD A. OPPEL Jr., NY Times & (IslamOnline.net & News Agencies) & The Globe & Mail & November 9, 2004 Rory McCarthy in Baghdad, The Guardian

Witnesses told IslamOnline.net that the two bridges and areas surrounding the hospital were not strategic for resistance fighters.

They said it is part of a US propaganda to lift up the spirits of the invading troops, adding that US forces warned hospital staff over loudspeakers not to leave the building.

FALLUJA, Iraq, Monday, Nov. 8 - The assault against Falluja began here Sunday night as American Special Forces and Iraqi troops burst into Falluja General Hospital on the western edge of the city and seized it within an hour.

At 10 p.m., Iraqi troops clambered off seven-ton trucks, sprinting with American Special Forces soldiers around the side of the main building of the hospital

Overall, the main force did not appear to have moved deeply into Fallujah on Monday, the first full day of the operation. Most U.S. units appeared to be lined up at the edge of their neighborhoods with some scouts and perhaps special operators venturing inside.

A National Public Radio correspondent embedded with the Marines outside Fallujah reported desertions among the Iraqis. One Iraqi battalion shrunk from over 500 men down to 170 over the past two week - with 255 members quitting over the weekend, the correspondent said.

Rumsfeld called reports of some Iraqi recruits not showing up to fight "an isolated problem," and Casey said the no-shows "did not have a significant impact" on the operation.

A senior aide to firebrand Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr urged Iraqi forces not to fight alongside U.S. troops.

"We appeal to the Iraqi National Guard and Iraqi police not to help the occupation troops as they want to target the Iraqi people in Fallujah," said Sheikh Abdul-Hadi al-Daraji. The Iraqi troops should not be a tool in the hands of the occupation troops."

At 10 p.m., Iraqi troops clambered off seven-ton trucks, sprinting with American Special Forces soldiers around the side of the main building of the hospital

Iraqi and US officials would not say if the move to capture territory marked the start of an all-out attack on the rebel stronghold. It was unclear whether the movement signaled the start of a major attack against insurgent positions, which are believed strongest in northern parts of the city.

As in April, they plan to take the city one sector at a time.

American troops fought their way into the western outskirts of the city on Monday but commanders said the toughest fight was yet to come: when American forces cross to the east bank of the Euphrates and enter the main part of Fallujah - including the Jolan neighborhood where insurgent defenses are believed the strongest.

In the first foray across the river into Fallujah proper, Marines on Monday morning secured an apartment building in the city's northwest corner, said Capt. Brian Heatherman, of the 3rd Battalion 1st Marine Regiment.

A few hundred yards away, an important strategic as well as symbolic battle was playing out: American troops, fighting to secure the western end of the two bridges across the Euphrates River, received intense fire from fortified insurgent positions on the east side of the river.

The U.S. military is reporting its first casualties of the Fallujah offensive. It says two Marines drowned when their bulldozer flipped over into the Euphrates River. Their bodies were discovered at 8 a.m. in the river, the U.S. military said.

Fighters caused some damage to the advancing US forces hitting two tanks in the north western area of Saqlawiya and seven oil tankers in Qarma in the northeast.

Marine escorts accompanied the soldiers from Iraq's 36th Commando Battalion in armored vehicles and secured the area.

They met little resistance except for a roadside bomb that exploded close to a US military vehicle wounding a marine.

Flares were dropped over the city to illuminate targets, and defenders fought back with heavy machine-gun fire.

Abu Bakr al-Dulaimi, an Iraqi journalist, told Aljazeera "An unmanned aircraft was downed in central Falluja and a US military vehicle was burnt behind the new bridge," said al-Dulaimi.

Masked insurgents roamed Fallujah streets throughout the day. One group of four fighters, two of them draped with belts of ammunition, moved through narrow passageways, firing on U.S. forces with small arms and mortars. Mosque loudspeakers blared, "God is great, God is great."

Hours after starting the offensive, U.S. tanks and Humvees from the 1st Infantry Division entered the northeastern Askari neighborhood.

One key reason to take Fallujah hospital early was likely to control information: The facility was the main source of Iraqi death tolls during the first U.S. siege of Fallujah in April, and U.S. commanders accused doctors there of exaggerating numbers.

Iraqi soldiers stormed through the facility, blasting open doors and pulling handcuffed patients into the halls in search of gunmen.

Ear-splitting bangs rang out as troops used a gunlike tool called a doorbuster, which uses the force from firing a blank .22-caliber cartridge to thrust forward a chisel to break heavy door locks.

Iraqi troops eagerly kicked the doors in, some not waiting for the locks to break. Patients and hospital employees were rushed out of rooms by armed soldiers and ordered to sit or lie on the floor while troops tied their hands behind their backs.

In less than an hour, the compound was secure. Most of the Iraqis had their cuffs snipped off and were sitting up along hallways in the hospital's main building. Doctors were back to attending to the most seriously ill, watched by Iraqi and American troops. There were broken doors and windows, but little in the way of more severe damage. **And there was only one injury: an Iraqi soldier who accidentally discharged his Kalashnikov rifle, injuring his lower leg.**

Dr. Al-Issawi denounced the U.S. seizure of the hospital. The Americans “thought that they would halt medical assistance to the resistance,” he said by telephone to a reporter inside the city. “But they did not realize that the hospital does not belong to anybody, especially the resistance.”

The doctor added that US forces had grounded all ambulances and fired on and disabled the hospital's only car. Doctors were also running short of medicines.

Al-Dulaimi said Falluja's general hospital had been undefended as it lay outside the city. "US forces have entered the hospital as it is not guarded; only doctors and patients are there," he said.

Although Falluja general hospital, a small, poorly-equipped facility on the western outskirts of the city, should have been protected under the Geneva conventions, it was deemed legitimate by US commanders because they said it had been taken over by insurgents.

MORE:

Nov 7, 2004: From: shailmanman

The main hospital of Falluja lies on an outskirt, an outlying open area across a bridge from the city. It thus cannot be held or defended by the resistance fighters who need and rely on urban landscape shelter. It was occupied held by the US as a command post at the start of the previous siege in April too, so it's no new achievement.

U.S. Soldier Killed On Patrol In Baghdad

November 8, 2004 JIM KRANE, AP

A U.S. soldier was killed when his patrol was fired on in Baghdad, the military said.

British Soldier Dead, Two Wounded Near Camp Dogwood

11.8.04 AP & Ananova

A British soldier from the Black Watch regiment was killed Monday and two were injured by a roadside bomb within the battle group's area of operations and north of the Black Watch's temporary base, Camp Dogwood, 48 kilometers (30 miles) southwest of Baghdad.

An MoD spokesman said in a statement: "**A Warrior armoured vehicle from the Black Watch Battle Group was hit by a roadside bomb north of Camp Dogwood.**

"**The Warrior left the road, its wheels destroyed on one side.**" The damaged Warrior was subsequently recovered to Camp Dogwood.

The incident came the day after two bomb disposal experts from the Royal Logistic Corps and the Royal Signals were seriously injured by a suicide car bomb.

Car Bomb Wounds U.S. Soldier In Mosul

2004-11-08 Middle East Online

RAMADI - At least four Iraqis were killed and over a dozen wounded, including a US soldier, in car bomb attacks on Monday in Ramadi.

In Mosul a car bomb hit a US convoy travelling in the central Al-Faislaihah neighbourhood, wounding one soldier, said a US military spokesman.

An AFP correspondent at the scene saw a big hole in the street and shattered glass from nearby buildings from the impact of the blast. At least three vehicles were also destroyed in the attack.

U.S. Convoy Attacked On Airport Road

November 8, 2004 JIM KRANE NEAR FALLUJAH, AP & SPA

A bomber blew up a car near a U.S. convoy on Baghdad's main airport road today, killing at least three persons, witnesses said.

A Reuters photographer saw American soldiers taking three bodies from a four-wheel-drive vehicle wrecked in the blast and loading them on stretchers into a military ambulance.

Two sports utility vehicles were caught in the explosion as the convoy traveled through the western Amiriyah district, spokesman Col. Adnan Abdul-Rahman said.

Earlier, a police officer at the scene said he believed the vehicles were hit by rocket-propelled grenades rather than a car bomb. One vehicle was overturned by the blast while the other burst into flames. **The number of casualties was not immediately known.**

Militants Used Grenade Attacks To Lure Black Watch Into Deadly Trap

05 November 2004 By Kim Sengupta in Baghdad and Richard Lloyd Parry in Camp Dogwood, Iraq, The Times & 2004-11-07, RICHARD LLOYD PARRY IN CAMP DOGWOOD, the Scotsman

The attack was carried out with deadly thoroughness, and took planning that illustrated the depth of the militants' information. The soldiers from the Black Watch had ventured on to the east bank of the Euphrates, outside their original area of operation. But somehow the insurgents knew they were coming, and were waiting.

In the early hours of the morning two Warrior armoured cars were attacked with rocket-propelled grenades and machine guns. But this appeared to have been purely intended to draw in other potential victims; the militants did not press home their attack.

The troops in the Warrior called for help and more soldiers arrived, setting up a vehicle checkpoint, on the northern road to Baghdad, and seemingly under the belief that the worst of it was over. The soldiers were now on foot, unprotected by armoured vehicles.

Then the final move was executed. A car packed with explosives drove up to the checkpoint. As one of the soldiers and an Iraqi interpreter leant inside the window, the car exploded. Three soldiers and the interpreter were killed. It had hardly been a secret in Baghdad and Fallujah that the insurgents had been carrying out detailed surveillance of the area where the British battle group was to deploy. This is after all a place where militants do traffic duty on roads guiding locals away from the places where they had planted bombs.

But yesterday's attack showed how flexible and adaptable the rebels are and does not augur well for the British forces in their new home. It would be hard to imagine many places that are bleaker, more miserable, and more dangerous than the Black Watch's new base at Camp Dogwood.

The featureless desert base is a wilderness of sand and mud. **Mortar shells and rockets fired by insurgents arc daily into the rubble-strewn ground but seldom has the mood been grimmer than it was last night.**

The Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir Michael Walker, who had flown in for consultations with senior officers, left abruptly in a flight of US Black Hawk helicopters, cancelling a scheduled press conference after learning of the deaths. Commanders ran in and out of meetings as the details of the ambush emerged.

As the sun was setting, two rockets whooshed overhead to land in the sandy mud of the base. Although they failed to explode they served as a reminder that, even inside Dogwood, British troops are at constant risk.

It started out as a busy and optimistic day for the 800-strong Black Watch battle group. After weeks of negotiations with the US Marines, who have overall control of this area, the regiment moved across the river Euphrates to expand its mission to rebel-dominated villages to the east.

Forty Black Watch soldiers accompanied a group of Royal Engineers who erected a metal reinforcement over a crumbling bridge across a tributary of the Euphrates. The bridge was intended to give armoured vehicles easier access to their new area of operation. It was put together at feverish speed, as the tense infantrymen crouched along the river bank with their guns poised.

"This is an easy target ... so it's important that you get in and out quickly and disperse," said Captain Jono Kelmanson. Within 21 minutes of attaching the first bolts, the Engineers were finished.

They handed out flyers bearing Scottish flags, and a photograph of a smiling Black Watch officer and two young Iraqi children. "Please allow me to introduce myself," read the Arabic message on the reverse. "I am a Scottish soldier of the Black Watch regiment. We ask you to ignore those who would reject our presence. What have they ever done for you but take away your sons and bring sadness and despair to your area?"

The flyers bore the cross of St Andrew, but conspicuously lacked the Union flag. "When people see the Union Jack, they think of it as English, and we want to emphasise that we're Scottish," said one Black Watch officer.

But to local people the main source of danger was the British soldiers themselves. Black Watch officers found themselves facing a crowd of more than a hundred distraught and excited schoolchildren and a furious teacher from a nearby school whose way home was blocked by the soldiers. **"The teacher is very angry because we're bringing danger to the children," said Captain Kelmanson. "By us being here, we attract the terrorists into the area.**

"She's quite right, and if we knew it was a school we would have got the timing better."

After yesterday's attack it is clear that local anxieties have been dramatically vindicated.

A senior Black Watch officer described the new area of responsibility as being the Iraqi equivalent of "Berkshire or Surrey with guns" - a region inhabited by former loyalists of Saddam Hussein who became wealthy and powerful under Saddam's regime. "This is an area of bright, well-educated people," he said before news of yesterday's deaths. "They can lay on deliberate, well thought-out attacks.

IN THE early hours of yesterday, guided only by the night vision goggles strapped to their helmets, a company of Black Watch soldiers walked silently through the desert hoping for a small success story at the end of a grim week.

Their objective was a group of houses on the west side of the Euphrates where, according to intelligence reports, heavy guns and other weapons were being stored.

The soldiers surrounded it, knocked on the door, and politely but forcefully made their entry. **Two hours later, they climbed back into their Warrior armoured vehicles as dawn was breaking - with nothing.**

If the next seven days are as bad as the past week has been, the fate of the Black Watch will be as much of a political problem as a military one.

Before their deployment 11 days ago, the Black Watch had been set three tasks: to block off 'rat runs' for guerrilla fighters escaping the imminent attack on Fallujah; to combat banditry; and to gather intelligence on the key resistance groups in the area.

As far as can be gathered from briefings given to the small British press pool in Camp Dogwood, there has been no palpable progress in any of these objectives.

No prisoners have been taken, no significant weapons caches have been uncovered, and if the dawn raid yesterday is anything to go by, no reliable sources of intelligence have so far been tapped.

But in the past week, these tasks have been eclipsed by a more pressing need: that of simply protecting the battle group itself. Rockets have whizzed into Dogwood on most days, although most have landed in empty areas of the vast camp, and at least half have failed to explode.

Some of these missiles have a range of as far as eight miles, and early last week the British battle group's radar revealed that some of them were being fired from the far, east bank of the Euphrates, formerly under the control of the US marines.

TROOP NEWS

Americas' Fall Harvest: A Crop Of Memorials For Dead Troops

Nov. 07, 2004 CHELSEA J. CARTER, Associated Press

Gregg Garvey sat on his porch, clutching a photograph of his son and trying to come to terms with the news the 23-year-old soldier was killed in an ambush in Iraq.

The father sat for hours, his cheeks wet with tears, staring at a flagpole in the yard of his Keystone Heights, Fla., home. He wondered how he would survive the overwhelming grief, and how many other parents had the same empty feeling.

Slowly, an image began to come to him, the image of a monument at the base of the flag pole. Then it became clearer: It was a statue of a field cross -- a soldier's helmet atop a downturned M-16. He could see his son's name, Army Sgt. Justin "Hobie" Garvey, on it. Then he could see more monuments with more names.

"I just looked at the picture of Hobie," recalls the 50-year-old father, "and said, 'Hobie, we've got a lot of work to do.' "

As the country honors its military men and women this Veterans Day, for many it will be a time to recall the ultimate sacrifice of the more than 1,100 troops killed in Iraq. **Across the country, communities, friends and family members like Gregg Garvey are creating scores of special memorials.**

There are streets, buildings, even a ship and a mountain peak renamed for fallen soldiers.

In honor of his son, killed July 20, 2003, near Tal Afar, Iraq, Gregg Garvey has pledged to erect a bronze field cross statue in the hometown of every soldier killed in Iraq. To date, Garvey's project has raised enough money through donations and the sales of flags for seven statues, at \$7,500 each.

"I'm not going to dwell on what could have been. My son would not have wanted me to feel sorry for myself," Garvey said. "It's going to work. I just hit 50 years old. My grandfather just turned 100 this year. I have another 50 years to get this done."

Across the country, other new memorials appear in varied types, but all stir deep feelings.

In Dartmouth, Mass., outside the town hall, officials dedicated a black granite bench inscribed with the name of Army Sgt. Peter Enos, who was killed in April 2003 in Bayji when his patrol vehicle was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade.

Deborah Enos, 59, and her husband, Gerald, attended the dedication of the bench.

"I've been back once or twice," the mother said. "It just brings sadness right now. I know the town did it with the best of intentions ... But it's too much for us right now.

"We don't know how to go through it. We do a moment at a time."

Thousands of miles away in Katy, Texas, the parents of Army 1st Lt. Jonathan Rozier regularly drive by a building bearing their son's name: the American Legion Post. It was renamed for Rozier, who was killed July 19, 2003, when his unit was attacked while providing security at a municipal building in Baghdad.

That's not the only memorial to him. Tidewater Inc. of New Orleans, where his late grandmother worked for more than 20 years, also christened one of its supply ships the M/V Jonathan Rozier, and a dining hall in Baghdad bears the soldier's name.

"It allows his name and his memory to go on," said his mother, Barbara Rozier. "Someday somebody's gonna ask, 'Who is Jonathan Rozier?' The story can be told about who he was and what he did."

The memorials are not limited to streets and buildings. In Phoenix, a mountaintop -- a popular climbing spot -- was renamed Piestewa Peak for 23-year-old Army Spc. Lori Piestewa, the first American servicewoman killed in combat in Iraq.

In Tampa, Fla., Lance Cpl. Andrew J. Aviles used to jog with his unit along an access road outside a Marine base; now a portion of the road is named for him. Aviles, just 18, was killed on April 7, 2003, when his amphibious vehicle was hit by enemy fire outside of Baghdad.

Ray Cottrell, 71, doesn't bear the personal loss of a son or daughter in Iraq. But he knows what it has done to his community in Brandenburg, Ky., near Fort Knox.

Outside his Ford dealership, he and his staff have been erecting small white crosses bearing the name of every service member killed since the war began in Iraq. Nearby, the sign tallies the numerical toll.

Cottrell has vowed to maintain the Normandy-style tribute until U.S. soldiers stop dying in Iraq.

"The happiest thing would be that we wouldn't have to put any more of them up."

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation, the cuts to veterans' benefits, or the dangers of depleted uranium - is the first reason Traveling Soldier is necessary. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

DC Politicians Put U.S. Troops At Serious Risk Of Torture & Beheading

November 05, 2004 By Conn Hallinan, Portside

"...The Parties to the conflict shall at all times distinguish between the civilian population and combatants and between civilian objects and military objectives and accordingly shall direct their operations only against military objectives"
Article 48, 1977 addition to the Geneva Conventions, Part IV

The above "Basic Rule" is at the heart of the Geneva Conventions

It is not something the Bush Administration has paid much attention to as it goes about the "pacification" of Iraqi cities where local insurgents are resisting the American occupation.

Consider the following.

On Oct. 8, U.S. fighter bombers carried out what the Pentagon called a "precision strike" against "terrorist leaders" in Falluja, a sprawling city of 300,000 west of Baghdad. For the past two months Falluja has been the target of a bombing campaign. According to the New York Times, the attack wounded 17 people, nine of whom were women and children. The victims were apparently from a wedding party that had just dispersed.

The Times went on to quote a "senior Pentagon official" who said, "We know what the strike was supposed to hit and we hit it. If a wedding party was going on, well, it was in concert with a meeting of a top Zarqawi lieutenant." Zarqawi is a Jordanian who has claimed credit for numerous roadside bombings and assassinations in Iraq.

But according to Article 50 of the Conventions, "The presence within the civilian population of individuals who do not come within the definition of civilians does not deprive the population of its civilian character."

In short, the attack violated the Conventions, and the "Pentagon official"---most likely Assistant Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz--- should be arrested and tried for violating international law. Since the attack constituted a "grave breach" of the Conventions, the official could also be charged under the 1996 U.S. War Crimes Act.

In the same article, the Times also quoted a "senior Bush Administration official" as saying that the bombing was helpful for exploiting "fault lines" in Falluja, and that it would push the "citizenry" of Falluja to deny sanctuary and assistance to the insurgents, "adding "that's a good thing."

The "official" might, indeed, think it was "a good thing," but it also violated Article 51, which states: "The civilian population as such, as well as individual civilians, shall not be the object of attack."

A "Pentagon official" also told the Times: "If there are civilians dying in connection with these attacks, and with the destruction, the locals at some point have to make a decision. Do they want to harbor the insurgents and suffer the consequences that come with that?"

In other words, terrify the civilian population into cooperating, a strategy that Article 51 explicitly forbids: "Acts or threats of violence, the primary purpose of which is to spread terror among the civilian population, are prohibited."

It is not only a record Americans should be ashamed of, it is one that should make us afraid.

The Geneva Conventions and other international laws were not drawn up by bleeding heart liberals, nor were they designed to protect weaker nations. They were a response to the enormous numbers of civilian casualties inflicted by World War II, **and as a practical way to shield everyone's armed forces from humiliation, torture and death at the hands of an adversary.**

If we are cavalier or dismissive about international law, it will encourage others to be so as well. The most likely victims of that policy will be we civilians, *as well as our own uniformed forces.*

If we torture prisoners and hide them from the eyes of organizations like the Red Cross, why shouldn't others do the same to our soldiers and civilians?

Slip Slidin' Away

November 4, 2004 By JUDY DEMPSEY, International Herald Tribune

New Zealand is withdrawing its 60 engineers and Thailand said it wanted to bring home its 450 troops. Singapore has reduced its contingent to 33, from 191; Moldova has trimmed its force to 12, from 42. On Wednesday Bulgaria's Defense Ministry said it would reduce its 483 troops to 430 next month, Reuters reported.

Vets Group Asks Why Is Pentagon Breaking Law, Ignoring Iraq Troops Health?

10/15/2004 Veterans for Common Sense

VCS has these questions for both the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense, as well as for Congress:

Veterans want to know if the lessons of the first Gulf War are being applied to Iraq War and Afghanistan veterans.

Why did the Pentagon fail to follow the law, according to the Government Accountability Office, and fail to give pre-and post-deployment physical examinations to tens of thousands of soldiers deployed to the Iraq War.

What steps will the Pentagon and VA take to ensure that Iraq and Afghanistan veterans do not have to wait years, or even decades, for their problems to be recognized and addressed.

In a year where every politician waves the flag of "supporting the troops," **why did Congress have time to pass a massive corporate tax-relief bill, but adjourned without voting on a budget for the VA or extended benefits for the troops.**

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward this E-MAIL along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, at home and in Iraq. Send requests to address up top.

General Complained Iraq Troops Undersupplied; Admits Soldiers Had No Body Armor

10.18.04 United Press International & By Thomas E. Ricks, Washington Post Staff Writer

The top U.S. commander in Iraq complained to the Pentagon last winter that his supply situation was so poor that it threatened Army troops' ability to fight, according to an official document that has surfaced only now.

The former U.S. commander in Iraq issued an urgent plea to the Pentagon last winter for supplies, saying he was unable to sustain readiness.

In a memo obtained by the Washington Post, Army Lt.-Gen. Ricardo Sanchez wrote: "I cannot continue to support sustained combat operations with (supply) rates this low."

Sanchez, who was the senior commander on the ground in Iraq from the summer of 2003 until this summer, said in his letter that Army **units in Iraq were struggling just to maintain "... relatively low readiness rates on combat systems, such as M-1 Abrams tanks, Bradley Fighting Vehicles, anti-mortar radars and Black Hawk helicopters."**

The lack of key spare parts for gear vital to combat operations, such as tanks and helicopters, was causing problems so severe, Army Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez wrote in a letter to top Army officials, that **"I cannot continue to support sustained combat operations with rates this low."**

In some Army supply depots in Iraq, 40 percent of critical parts were at "zero balance," meaning they were absent from depot shelves, he said.

He also protested in his letter, sent Dec. 4 to the number two officer in the Army, with copies to other senior officials, that his soldiers still needed protective inserts to upgrade 36,000 sets of body armor but that their delivery had been

postponed twice in the month before he was writing. There were 131,000 U.S. troops in Iraq at the time.

Readiness rates also generally dipped last spring when insurgents destroyed seven bridges along the main supply route from Kuwait to Baghdad, Christianson said. In some cases, he said, supplies were cut off for "several days."

Fewer Black Recruits Joining The Armed Forces

(Oct. 7) By CHRISTOPHER COOPER Staff Reporter, The Wall Street Journal

The U.S. Army's ability to attract African-American soldiers has plummeted recently, a trend that threatens to place further strains on a military already stretched by wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Blacks attracted to the force numbered 12,103, or 15.6% of the total enlistment pool, in the year ended Sept. 30, down from a peak of 16,695, or 21% of recruits, in fiscal 2002, statistics gathered by the Army's recruiting command show. The timing of the drop in the share of black recruits roughly corresponds with the mass movement of troops to the Middle East and the outbreak of the Iraq war.

Figures for the Army Reserve show a similar, albeit more dramatic, drop -- of about 27% for the same period.

The current decline comes at an awkward time for the Army, which is being pressed by the Pentagon to provide more combat-ready soldiers. In August, the Army began offering \$10,000 bonuses to recruits. Yesterday, it sweetened the offer, tacking on a \$3,000 "quick ship" bonus for recruits who are ready to enter immediately. Also in August, it bumped up the cash awarded for college to \$70,000 from \$50,000. Such incentives, Pentagon officials and others say, often appeal to potential recruits from less wealthy families. The Army has traditionally used cash bonuses to nudge up enlistments in peacetime.

Black recruits have historically been overrepresented in "behind-the-line" support roles. Indeed, Pentagon statistics from fiscal 2003 show that 67% of all black soldiers were in combat service or support units.

At the time that the Iraq war began, only 16% of black soldiers were in combat arms units. This gravitation toward support roles reflects what some potential black enlistees hope to receive from a career in the Army: stable employment with good benefits and the ability to develop skills that can be easily transferred to the civilian sector. Front-line positions, such as those in the infantry, don't provide much in the way of marketable job skills.

But the war in Iraq has turned such distinctions on their head. Almost from the outset, enemy fighters concentrated their attacks on rear-guard soldiers, and soldiers in

support functions make up many of the more than 1,000 Americans that have been killed there. "There's really no front line/rear echelon any more," says Charlie Moskos, a Northwestern University sociologist who specializes in military organizations. "Obviously, the war is one major factor" in the sharp decline in black recruitment, he says.

In a recent discussion with reporters, Gen. Rochelle of the Army's recruiting command says that while a variety of conditions have an effect on enlistment -- such as the economy -- combat also can have a powerful influence on overall induction rates. **"Obviously, there's a war going on and, for some of our prospects, that is a drawback and it will deter them," he says.**

Northwestern's Mr. Moskos says one of the main reasons that black recruits stick with the Army is the perception that African-Americans have of it as a relatively color-blind institution that allows minorities opportunities for advancement. Rare is the American institution, Mr. Moskos says, "where whites are routinely bossed around by blacks."

Some say, however, that the perception of the Army as an egalitarian institution may be eroding, again because of the Iraq war. David Segal, a University of Maryland sociology professor, says two recent events connected to the war may have resonated among potential black recruits in a way that wasn't reflected among white enlistees.

The first was a recent bill submitted by Rep. Charles Rangel, a black congressman from New York, which called for a resumption of a universal military draft. Though the bill was killed this week by Congress, it drew extensive attention, as did Mr. Rangel's justification for submitting it. **Mr. Rangel says he wanted a draft, in part, because he wanted to ensure that the offspring of wealthy citizens shared equally in the burden of war. And though Mr. Rangel couched his argument in terms of class, many black Americans equated it to race, Mr. Segal says.**

A second event occurred at the beginning of the Iraq war, when Pvt. Jessica Lynch, a white female soldier in an Army maintenance company, was taken hostage by marauding Iraqis. The story of Pvt. Lynch and her eventual rescue by special-forces soldiers was extensively chronicled by the Pentagon and the U.S. media.

Less noticed was the story of Spc. Shoshona Johnson, a black woman, who was in the same maintenance unit as Pvt. Lynch and was also taken hostage and later rescued. Her story got far less attention, and Mr. Segal says he has heard anecdotally that this has fostered resentment in the black community.

Whether the Pentagon was fair in its treatment of the two women is beside the point, Mr. Segal says; the perception is all that matters. **"The Department of Defense needed a hero, and it was nice to have one who was pretty and blond," he says. "I've heard a great deal about that."**

An Open Letter To British Soldiers In Iraq:

Dear British service person in Iraq.

I met some of you in Basra this year, guarding the Republican Palace/Occupation HQ. You were told not to speak to me but you did so anyway. You were open and frank about your conditions, how you felt local people were interacting with you; you felt frustrated by the hostility some were feeling towards you. But you also felt pride about having helped remove a dictator from power.

I spent almost nine months living in Iraq, working with and supporting workers, trade unionists, womens groups, Palestinian refugees, human rights organisations and family, and from my experience, albeit limited, I want you to know that that dictatorship is creeping back.

The Iraqi Prime Minister our government and that of the US has imposed is a former Baathist who used to be in charge of the youth wing of the Baath party intelligence apparatus. He was responsible for the torture of students and young people struggling for freedom and direct democracy.

In July, the Sydney Morning Herald reported that he had killed up to six suspects in a Baghdad police station at close-range with his own gun, just weeks into his term. The Minister of Defence, Security Minister and Interior Minister, are all former Baathists. The dreaded secret police are back on the payroll with thousands of former torturers being given back their old jobs. History is repeating itself.

Bosses, the same bosses who would write reports on any workers organising for their rights, and get them tortured or killed, are still in power and still intimidating workers. Our government, along with the US has decided to keep Saddam Hussein's old anti-union laws on the statute books. Life for ordinary working class people in Iraq, ordinary working class people like you, with families and girlfriends, who want a vocation, education, achievement, security and decent living standards, is rapidly deteriorating.

Millions are still living in poverty, fear and a re-cycled oppression. The kind of people who terrorised and abused ordinary people in Iraq, are doing it again. With the help of our government and with the help of your presence in Iraq. I know this because I lived with and worked with ordinary working people in Iraq, who now cannot even barely speak to me over the phone, without having to lie, to twist their talk, grown men afraid of their own voices, because they know they are being listened to, they know the old psychosis they had to live through, is seeping back into their lives, poisoning their families.

The only reconstruction of any impact on Iraqi peoples lives right now is that of the old regime, which you thought you'd dismantled, revived with bigger guns, more soldiers, and old corruption oiled with new bloodshed.

There are plans to have you replace US troops in Iskandaria, Mahmoudia, and Latifiya. Resistance flashpoints. I lost a close friend who I thought was invincible, on the road through Iskandaria. He was shot in the chest three times and once in the head and left face-down in on Burning August asphalt for over a day. You may also be asked to serve in Sadr City - a sprawling ghetto and not a 'suburb' as the media frequently reports it - where you will encounter Shia and Northern Kurdish communities evicted by the Baath from their land during the Iran war. People there have lived and died in suffering. You will be facing an 'enemy' the current government and last government considered an enemy.

You are adding your courage, your conscience and your blood, to replacing the same oppression you fought to remove. Working class people, trying to taste the freedom they had scorched out of their lives through massacre and home-demolition, land razing and murder will be your designated 'enemy'. Ask yourself, who made you their enemy?

Atrocities will be perpetrated in Fallujah, at the hands of and against US troops. People all over Iraq and all over the world will know that what is happening to people in Fallujah has been made directly possible by your filling in for US troops. You will be complicit. You will be accessories to crimes against humanity; a carnage which will have a boomerang affect on the centres of the planning and funding of those crime, both in Britain and the US.

You will kill people who for years planned, dreamed, and tried to take control of their own lives and communities, finally, out of the hands of tyrants and murderers only to be faced with more of the same.

The war was illegal. The occupation is illegal. And you will be asked to commit illegal acts, which in the future you could be tried for.

According to the Manual of Law of Armed Conflict for the British Military, 'Orders to commit crimes against humanity are considered to be manifestly unlawful. Orders from a superior, in this context, include orders from a government or superior military or civilian law or national regulation. The serviceman is under duty to Not obey a manifestly unlawful order'.

You are within your rights to refuse orders which are in breach of international humanitarian law.

Our own tidal wave of refusal here, to the war and occupation, is massive. Refuse your orders, the whole world is watching. Refuse your orders. I will, along many others here in the UK, support you. Refuse your orders, in the name of humanity, your own and that of those you have been hired to deny. You will be supported. Refuse.

In solidarity
Ewa Jasiewicz

Called "US Citizens" But Puerto Rican Soldiers Were Not Allowed To Vote In US Presidential Election

October 15, 2004 By Shelley Murphy, Boston Globe Staff

Over the stern objections of a judge from Puerto Rico, a federal appeals court in Boston ruled yesterday that US citizens living in Puerto Rico do not have the right to vote in presidential elections.

In a two-page opinion, the US Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, relying on two prior rulings, concluded that the US Constitution does not confer voting rights on Puerto Rico, **an American territory whose residents were granted US citizenship in 1917.**

But in a sharply worded dissent, Judge Juan R. Torruella of Puerto Rico wrote, "What we have in this case is without question the creation and perpetuation of substandard, second-class citizens, with less rights than those enjoyed by the main class of US citizens."

Close to 3,500 US soldiers from Puerto Rico have been dispatched to Iraq and Afghanistan, and 20 were killed in Iraq as of Sept. 28, the judge said.

Webmasters At War On The Digital Battlefield

[Thanks to Dennis O'Neil, who sent this one in.]

(An article in the November 2004 number of *Technology Review* reports on how successful in the Iraq war has been "force transformation" -- whose basic idea is that "information technologies allow you to substitute information for mass," in the words of Stuart Johnson, research professor at the National Defense University, and of which the Stryker brigades--two out of three are based at Fort Lewis--- are now the emblem.

(The answer is: at the divisional level and above, it worked well. But for the soldiers on the ground and in the field, it failed:

("[B]reakdowns quickly became the norm," writes David Talbot, a senior editor of *TR*. In practice, convoys were moving too fast and too far for the antenna relays, which need to be stationary to function. Stopping to receive intelligence data often exposed units to attack. "A lot of the guys said, "Enough of this shit," and turned it off.'

(In many cases, text-only e-mail, meant to be a back-up, became the principal means of communication.

(In this war, it didn't matter much: "Fortunately for U.S. forces, they faced little resistance during the Iraq War."

(Advocates of "force transformation" are not discouraged. They point to Afghanistan, where "alpha geeks" coordinated special forces teams by means of webmaster who maintained a tactical web page, as an example of the horizontally flowing information and decision-making that will characterize the warfare of the future.

(Mark Jensen)

HOW TECHNOLOGY FAILED IN IRAQ

By David Talbot

The Iraq War was supposed to be a preview of the new U.S. military: a light, swift force that relies as much on sensors and communications networks as on heavy armor and huge numbers. **But once the shooting started, technology fell far short of expectations.**

Technology Review

November 2004 Full article at:

<http://www.technologyreview.com/articles/04/10/talbot1104.asp?trk=top>

Military Cop Sgt. Gets 12 Years: Deliberately Spread AIDS

October 20, 2004 Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. — An Army sergeant at Fort Jackson, S.C., has been sentenced to 12 years in prison for knowingly infecting other people with HIV, base officials said Tuesday.

Sgt. Justin K. Kinlock, 26, was court-martialed Monday after he pleaded guilty to 10 charges of aggravated assault and one charge of disobeying a superior commissioned officer, according to a news release. Kinlock has been dishonorably discharged.

An unidentified Fort Jackson soldier tested positive for the virus during a routine pregnancy screening and told medical officials Kinlock was the father, officials said. A total of 10 soldiers since have come forward.

Kinlock had been assigned to the 17th Military Police Detachment. He was diagnosed with HIV while stationed at Fort Lewis, Wash. in 1998.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Falluja Fighter Says “All We Want Is The Americans To Leave”

November 9, 2004 Rory McCarthy in Baghdad, The Guardian

I asked one of them, a young teacher from Saudi Arabia, why he was there. He started reading the verses in the Qur'an that urge Muslims to commit jihad. He read about the importance of martyrdom. After 20 minutes, he directed me to another fighter, an older man with a beard and a soft voice who said his name was Abu Ossama from Tunisia.

"The most important thing is our religion, not Falluja and not the occupation. If the American solders came to me and converted to Islam, I won't fight them."

Abu Yassir, a short, heavy-built, middle-aged Iraqi with a grey beard, was the "amir", or commander, of this group. He was a more experienced fighter and looked after the others.

He was a retired military officer and ran a business making electric generators. He was happy to see the back of Saddam Hussein and to get rid of the Ba'athist regime.

But, he said, "as the time passed by and as the occupation became more visible, more patriotic feelings grew bigger and bigger. Every time I saw the Americans patrolling our streets I became more humiliated."

He described how locals from Falluja and other places started to organise themselves into small cells and to attack the Americans.

"We just wanted them to leave our cities. In the beginning I had a 'job' every month, setting IEDs [improvised explosive devices] or firing mortars, and would go back to my work most of the time. **But then I realised I can't do any thing but jihad as long as the Americans occupied my country.**"

He closed his workshop, sold his business and used the money to sponsor the group of fighters.

"The world is convinced that we people of Falluja are happy to kill the innocents, that's not true, even when we execute collaborators and people working for the Americans, I feel sad for them and sometimes cry, but this is a war."

There they took their final fighting positions and designated one of them, a young Iraqi, as the unit's martyr - a fighter whose task is to explode himself next to the Americans.

The amir told me: "**All we want is the Americans to leave, and then everything will be fine**, the Kurds will stop talking about seceding from Iraq, the Shias will stop talking about settling scores with Sunnis and each province will elect a council and these councils will elect a president.

"That is the election we see democratic, not an American one."

But, he said: "We are besieged here now. It is a great emotional victory, but bad strategy. It is very easy now for the Americans to come and kill us all."

**OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION
BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!**

Explosion Kills Three Occupation Cops

08/11/2004 AP

Policeman Adnan Jassim Mohammed said two mortar rounds were fired at police cars parked outside of the Yarmouk Hospital in western Baghdad killing at least three policemen.

He said there may be more casualties to come, adding: "They are still transferring the wounded."

"They targeted the police," he said of the attackers.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Terror & Democracy

Thomas Wheeler, Beyond the Mainstream

When 3,000 people were killed on 9/11 in the United States of America, it was called a barbaric act of terrorism. When 100,000 Iraqis are killed, it is called an act of liberation and "bringing democracy to Iraq."

To get a handle of how devastating the carnage has been, we should extrapolate those numbers and apply them to the United States. The US has a population of

approximately 290 million. Iraq's population is around 24 million. The US population is more than 12 times that of Iraq.

Imagine an invasion and occupation of the US that killed between 1.2 and 2.4 million Americans, most of them women and children, through precision air strikes, bombings, and large scale assaults on urban and suburban neighborhoods. Imagine routine house-to-house invasions where your fellow Americans were kidnapped and taken from their homes by the hundreds of thousands.

Here's another way of looking at it. The 100,000 killed in Iraq relative to its population is the equivalent of perpetrating four hundred 9/11-style attacks on America. That comes out to five 9/11 attacks per week, every week, for 18 months. **That's 15,000 Americans being killed every week.**

The Iraqi population has little tolerance for this level of terror and mass murder while under occupation.

That is why they are engaged in legitimate resistance. Would Americans react any differently if they were forced to live under similar conditions?

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

OCCUPATION REPORT

All Gone

17 October 2004 By Rajiv Chandrasekaran, The Washington Post

Late last month, as I was packing my possessions and preparing to return to Washington after 18 months as The Post's bureau chief in Baghdad... it became clear how much my life as a journalist in Iraq had changed over those months, and how much things had changed for Iraqis.

My folding road map, dog-eared from repeated excursions last year, had grown dusty on my bookshelf. By this summer, every road leading out of Baghdad had become too dangerous to travel. North to Mosul, west to Ramadi, northeast to Baqubah, southeast to Kut, south to Hilla, Karbala, Najaf and Basra - all had turned into "red routes" in the parlance of security specialists, meaning too dangerous to travel.

The capital itself was a patchwork of red (no-go) and yellow (proceed with extreme caution) zones, surrounding the American-controlled Green Zone. Neighborhoods where I had visited Iraqi friends for lunch were now too insecure to enter. And even if I was willing to chance it, my Iraqi friends didn't want to risk being seen allowing a foreigner into their house.

Iraqis On U.S. Election: Same Old Shit

Nov 4 & Nov. 3, By Lin Noueihed, BAGHDAD (Reuters) & AFP

"Bush talks about freedom and democracy but all the Americans have brought is death and destruction. Where's our electricity? Where's our oil money?" asked Abu Ghazwan, a greengrocer in southwestern Baghdad.

"They call Saddam a criminal, but Bush is the biggest criminal and terrorist in the world. I only expect crimes and killings and occupation of Muslim countries from him," said Waad Mohammed Ali, a butcher in Baghdad's central Karrada area.

"Not that Kerry would have been much better. They're all determined to suck our blood."

"Choosing Bush for a new term is a crisis for Iraqis, especially people in Falluja, because it will prompt him to continue his policy of killing and destruction against Arabs and Muslims," said Mohammed Ali, a student from the rebel-held Sunni Muslim city that faces daily U.S. bombardment.

"The occupation would have continued even if Kerry won, so I'm not happy either way," said Ismael Saleh from the northern city of Kirkuk. **"I'll only be happy when the occupation ends."**

"Even if Kerry had won it would have been the same for Arabs," said Meqdad Qais al-Hakim, a Shi'ite Muslim grocer in Baghdad. "But since Bush won I hope he will pull the American forces out of Iraq and hold elections on time."

"U.S. policy will not change, whether Bush or Kerry is in the White House, so it's all the same to us," said Raad Fadel, sitting in a shop selling musical instruments in Baghdad.

"We have realized from experience that U.S. policy does not change with presidents," said Hashem Yousef, a beekeeper from Basra. "What I care about is elections in my own country."

Ibrahim Khalil, who dropped in from his own carpet shop next door disagreed: "They are all the same but I'd prefer Kerry because it's good to vary the flavor."

"They are fighting for the presidency of America but all I care about is what the winner will do for my country," said Mustafa Nouri, 50, a merchant from Basra in the far south. **"I support whoever will pull the American troops out of Iraq."**

Another man compared Bush to Mongol invader Hulagu, grandson of Ghengis Khan, who plundered Baghdad in 1258 and killed close to one million people.

"Hulagu flooded the Tigris with blood and Bush is washing the streets of Iraq with blood every day," says Qusaïy Wali, 29, an engineer.

"He destroyed us!" says Umm Marwan, a 30-year-old school teacher.

"God help our people in Fallujah," he adds, referring to the Sunni Muslim insurgency bastion, west of Baghdad, where US troops are poised for an all-out assault against militants there.

"Bush's policies have increased terror all over the world," says Sheikh Mizher al-Asi, 55, a leader of the powerful Sunni Obeid tribe in northern Iraq.

"We hope the American president will change his policy toward Iraq ... because Iraq is oppressed and can't remain occupied," Salem Shummari told Reuters Television.

OCCUPATION AFRICA:

Ivory Coast Soldiers, Citizens Fight French Imperial Occupation Troops: "Everybody Get Your Frenchman"

French, Ivory Coast Forces Battle

11.6.04 AP, ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast

French troops clashed with soldiers and angry mobs Saturday after government warplanes killed at least nine French soldiers and an American civilian in an airstrike mayhem that threatened to draw foreign troops deeper into Ivory Coast's escalating civil war.

Violence broke out in Ivory Coast's largest city after France retaliated for the airstrike by destroying two government warplanes at an airport outside the capital.

Thousands of pro-government youths, some armed with machetes, axes or chunks of wood, took to the streets of the country's commercial capital, Abidjan.

Crowds went door to door looking for French citizens and set fire to a French school, sending a pall of smoke over the city.

"Everybody get your Frenchman!" young men in the mob shouted to each others.

French diplomats preparing a sharp warning to Ivory Coast's government. France quickly sent three Mirage fighter jets to West Africa and ordered more troops to Ivory Coast in response to the violence.

France has about 4,000 troops in Ivory Coast, and a separate U.N. occupation force numbers around 6,000.

Saturday's violence began when government warplanes struck French positions at Brobo, near the northern rebel-held town of Bouake, in the afternoon, U.N. military spokesman Philippe Moreux said.

Eight French soldiers were killed and 23 others wounded, said Defense Ministry spokesman Jean-Francois Bureau in Paris. An American citizen was also killed in the raid, the French presidency said, without providing details.

A ninth French soldier died of his wounds

France sent three Mirage fighter jets, due to arrive in nearby Gabon. and French President Jacques Chirac said he ordered the deployment of two more military companies to Ivory Coast.

In the violence in Abidjan, townspeople tried to overrun a French military base near the airport. French troops fired in the air and lobbed tear gas at the crowd.

"French go home!" people chanted as they marched through the city. They went house to house, seeking out French civilians, French military spokesman Henry Aussavy said.

At the same time, Ivory Coast soldiers tried to destroy French aircraft at the airport itself, sparking clashes with French forces, a French spokesman, Jacques Combarieu, said. Combarieu said a French soldier was lightly injured and an airplane was lightly damaged before the fighting ended.

Ivory Coast, the world's top cocoa producer, had been the pride of France's former colonial empire. **[And obviously the French Empire has not intention of changing that state of affairs.]**

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The following that we know of have also posted issues:

<http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/> ; www.gifightback.org ;

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